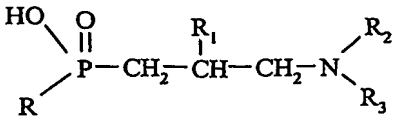
CLAIMS:

1. A compound of formula I



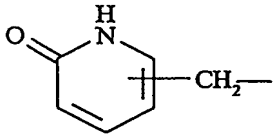
(I)

wherein

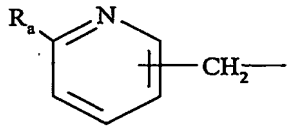
R is (C_{3-5})alkyl, di(C_{1-4})alkoxymethyl, (C_{3-6})cycloalkyl(C_{1-4})alkyl or benzyl optionally substituted in the aromatic ring by one to three radicals selected from (C_{1-4})alkyl, (C_{1-4})alkoxy and halo,

R_1 is hydrogen or hydroxy,

R_2 is a group of formula



or



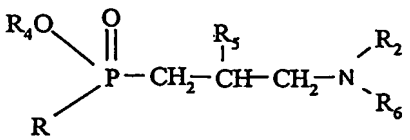
wherein R_a is (C_{1-4})alkoxy, and

R_3 is hydrogen or (C_{1-4})alkyl,

or a salt thereof.

2. A compound of claim 1 which is {2-(S)-hydroxy-3-[(6-oxo-1,6-dihydro-pyridin-3-ylmethyl)-amino]-propyl}-(cyclohexylmethyl)-phosphinic acid, in free base or salt form.

3. A process for the production of a compound of formula I as defined in claim 1, in free base or salt form, which comprises, in a compound of formula II



(II)

wherein R and R_2 are as defined in claim 1, R_4 is a hydroxy-protecting group, R_5 is hydrogen or protected hydroxy and R_6 is R_3 as defined in claim 1 or an amino-protecting group, or in a salt thereof freeing the hydroxy group by replacing the hydroxy-protecting group R_4 by hydrogen and, where appropriate, freeing the hydroxy group R_1 from the protected hydroxy group R_5, removing the amino-protecting group R_6 and, if desired, converting a resulting compound into a different compound of formula I, separating a mixture of isomers into its components and/or converting a salt into the corresponding free compound or vice-versa.

4. A compound of claim 1 or 2, in free base or pharmaceutically acceptable salt form, for use as a pharmaceutical.

5. A pharmaceutical composition comprising a compound of claim 1 or 2, in free base or pharmaceutically acceptable salt form, in association with a pharmaceutical carrier or diluent.

6. The use of a compound of claim 1 or 2, in free base or pharmaceutically acceptable salt form, for the manufacture of a medicament for the treatment of epilepsy, cerebral insufficiency, cognition deficits, depression, schizophrenia, or anxiety.

7. A method for the treatment of epilepsy of the "petit mal" type, cerebral insufficiency, depression and anxiety, in a subject in need of such treatment, which comprises administering to such subject a therapeutically effective amount of a compound of claim 1 or 2, in free base or pharmaceutically acceptable salt form.